

ADDENDUM TO THE JUNE LAKE AREA PLAN
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
Prepared for JUNE LAKE LOOP TRAIL PLAN
April 2003

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

In 1991, Mono County approved the *June Lake 2010: June Lake Area Plan* and the *Final June Lake Environmental Impact Report*. The *Area Plan* set forth policies and specific measures to guide development in June Lake over a 20-year horizon (through 2010), and the *Final EIR* evaluated the environmental impacts that would be associated with implementation of Area Plan elements.¹

The Area Plan evaluated a series of development alternatives, all of which were associated with one or more significant environmental effects. The preferred plan envisioned that June Lake would develop into a “moderately-sized, self-contained, year-round community” in which the housing inventory would increase along with expansion of summer and winter recreation, yet the basic character of June Lake as a mountain village would remain unchanged.

Key elements of the 1991 plan included new development around the Rodeo Grounds, West Village and the existing communities of June Lake Village and Down Canyon. The Pine Cliff area was shown for conditional development, and potential land exchanges were shown for parcels adjoining Down Canyon. Silver Lake Meadow and lands on the southern slope overlooking June Lake Village were shown for limited development or exchange into public ownership.

Overall, the 1991 Plan called for a peak population of about 12,700 in June Lake at any one time, which represented a 21% increase over the peak population of 10,500 forecast in the prior 1974 plan. The 1991 Plan called for development of 488 acres of land, compared with 318 acres in the 1974 plan, and increased development opportunities in the Rodeo Grounds and West Village while reducing growth potential at the base of June Mountain. To minimize the need for new roads and infrastructure, expansion areas were limited to lands adjacent to established communities.

The EIR prepared for the 1991 Update found that the proposed development plan would result in numerous significant but mitigable adverse impacts. However, it also concluded that 5 significant impacts were unavoidable. The significant unavoidable adverse effects of the 1991 Area Plan included:

- Degraded water quality from conversion of vegetation to impermeable surfaces
- Visual impacts along the backshore of Gull Lake, along Highway 158 in the area of the Rodeo Grounds, in Down Canyon, and in the Pine Cliff area
- Increased traffic along Hwy 158 and other surface streets
- Increased exposure to hazards including avalanches and volcanic activity
- Reduced wildlife habitat around the June Lake loop

¹ The *Final EIR* consists of both a Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) and an Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA). The MEA provided baseline information about the June Lake study area, and the EIA evaluated potential impacts.

SUMMARY OF THE 2003 JUNE LAKE LOOP TRAIL PLAN

The June Lake Trail Plan was prepared through a joint effort of the County and the June Lake Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). Goals of the plan are to create a conceptual framework for trail development that is consistent with the June Lake Area Plan and serves a wide range of trail uses. Following an eight-month effort in which the draft trail plan was changed substantially (largely to reduce the number of trails in the vicinity of residences), the CAC recommended approval of 21 trails as outlined on the following page.

CHANGES BETWEEN THE 1991 AREA PLAN AND THE 2003 TRAIL PLAN

The 2003 trail plan retains most of the trails contained in the 1991 Area Plan and also carries forward the fundamental concepts of public access. The primary differences between the two plans are outlined below.

- ***Greater Emphasis on Highway 158 as a Bike Route:*** Highway 158 is a key corridor for cyclists on the June Lake Loop. To enhance safety for cyclists and motorists alike, the current plan proposes a number of modifications that will make it safer for cyclists and other users of the roadway. These concepts are proposed for implementation within the existing highway right-of-way.
- ***Relocation of Non-Bicycle Trails Off-Road:*** The current Trail Plan proposes the relocation of most non-bicycle trails off of Highway 158. The relocation would enhance safety for all users of the Loop. The most important segment recommended for off-road relocation is the mid-slope trail proposed between June Lake Village and the June Lake public beach. This link is heavily used during summer months by pedestrians who currently walk along the shoulder of Highway 158. The mid-slope trail would separate motorists from hikers along this popular route.
- ***Elimination of Trails within June Lake Village:*** The 1991 Area Plan shows a number of trails within the June Lake Village area. The 2003 trail concept relies instead on only a few informal trail links within the Village, all of which connect to the primary trail network serving the 5-lake area and emphasize shared use of low-volume roads.
- ***Incorporation of Reversed Peak:*** Reversed Peak occupies a central position in the June Lake Loop. The peak overlooks all 5 lakes and offers a variety of scenic resources in its own right. In addition to the link previously shown in 1991 Area Plan trail system, the 2003 plan includes two new links to Reversed Peak from lower Down Canyon and from the Ballpark, utilizing existing informal trails where possible.
- ***Redesignation of the Silver Lake Trail for Equestrian Use Only:*** The existing trail on the west side of Silver Lake has been recommended for equestrian use only. Although this trail currently serves some pedestrian use, the right-of-way is narrow and equestrian use predominates due to the nearby stables.
- ***Elimination of the Trail along Rush Creek:*** The trail shown in the 1991 Area Plan along the west and east side of Rush Creek from Down Canyon to Grant Lake has been deleted from the 2003 Trail Plan. The reduction of foot traffic along the stream edge will help maintain a more pristine wetlands environment.

MONO COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM
JUNE LAKE LOOP²

TRAIL NAME	NUMBER / LETTER	START LOCATION	FINISH LOCATION	TERRAIN	TRAIL TYPE
PRIMARY TRAILS					
To Parker Lake	25	Hwy. 158	Parker Lake	Steady Climb	PR
To Agnew Lake	26	Hwy. 158	Agnew Lake	Steady Climb	PR
From Fern Creek	27	Hwy. 158	High Sierra Trails	Steady Climb	PR
To Reversed Peak	28	North Shore Drive	Reversed Peak	Steady Climb	PR
To Reversed Peak-North	28A	North Shore Drive	Snow Ponds	Steady Climb	PR
To Reversed Peak-West	28B	Silver Lake Trail	Snow Ponds	Steady Climb	PR
To June Mtn.-Yost Meadow	29	Hwy. 158	June Mtn. Ski Area	Steady Climb	PR
To Hwy. 395-Pine Cliff	30	North Shore Drive	Hwy. 395	Rolling/Flat	PR, MB, S
June Lake/Eastside Loop	31	Oh! Ridge	June Lake Village	Rolling/Flat	PR
June Lake/West Side Loop	32A	Campground	Village Ballpark	Rolling/Flat/Varied	PR
Rodeo Grounds to North Shore	32	Hwy. 158	Village Ballpark	Rolling/Flat/Varied	PR, MB
Down Canyon Hwy. 158 Loop	31	Rodeo Grounds	SCE/Hwy. 158	Rolling/Flat/Varied	PR, MB
Down Canyon Upper Trail	31A	Ski Area Parking Lot	Fern Creek Trail	Steady Climb, Flat, Varied	PR
Oh! Ridge Overlook	35B	North Shore Drive	Oh! Ridge Overlook	Steady Climb, Varied	PR
North June Lake to 395 Junction	35	North Shore Drive	June Lake Junction	Rolling/Flat	PR, MB
North June Lake to Hwy. 158	35A	North Shore Drive	Hwy. 158	Rolling/Flat	PR/MB
Gull Lake Eastside/Hwy 158 Loop	31	June Lk. Village/Hwy 158	Gull Lk. Campground	Rolling/Flat	PR
Silver Lake Eastside	31	Rush Creek Meadow	Rush Ck. Campground	Rolling/Flat	PR
SECONDARY TRAILS					
Gull Lake North Shore	33	Hwy. 158	North Shore Drive		
June Lake South Shore	34	Hwy. 158	North Shore Drive		
TOURING BICYCLE					
Hwy. 158 Loop	31	June Lake Junction	North Junction Hwys. 158/395		

² Legend: TB=Touring Bike; MB=Mountain Bike; PR=Pedestrian/Jogging; E=Equestrian; S=Snowmobiling; CC=Cross-Country Skiing.

- **Addition of a New Trail Linking Down Canyon to the Ridgeline Trail System:** The 2003 plan shows a trail that originates along the south and west end of Down Canyon, traversing the ridge behind Down Canyon and linking to the alpine trails to Thousand Island Lake and Agnew Meadows. This trail, which uses existing information trails to the extent possible, is intended to provide increased access between the June Lake Loop and the high country trail system.
- **Multi-Use Trails:** With only two exceptions, all trails are now recommended to be designated for multi-purpose use. The exceptions include the mid-slope trail around June Lake (recommended only for pedestrian use) and the trail along the south and west side of Silver Lake (recommended only for equestrian use).
- **Two New Overlook Trails:** The 2003 trail plan proposes two new overlook trails. One is located above Oh! Ridge, and the other is on the major rock outcropping on the north side of June Lake. Both provide outstanding vistas and utilize existing roads and trails.
- **New Access Trails:** Two new trails are proposed to follow existing access easements from the northern June Lake campground to Highway 395. One heads in a northeastern direction, and the other links to the Highway 396/158 junction.

ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The June Lake Loop trail planning process was undertaken to update, consolidate and enhance trail plans that had previously been prepared for the June Lake Loop. The objective of this planning effort is to create a strong conceptual framework for the June Lake Loop Trail Plan that is consistent with the purpose and intent of the June Lake Area Plan and serves a wide range of trail uses. The 2003 trail plan embodies the general concepts presented in the 1991 Area Plan and, as noted above, there are only a limited number of changes in the proposed layouts or uses of the trail system.

Moreover, both the 1991 Plan and the current Plan present programmatic planning concepts requiring further evaluation when detailed proposals are submitted. Concepts presented in the document will be more fully articulated as funding becomes available for the detailed planning and implementation of individual trail segments. Actual trail development will depend on the success of the County, the U.S. Forest Service, Caltrans and others in seeking out grant monies and other funding sources to expedite the implementation process. Further CEQA and/or NEPA compliance, as appropriate, would occur at the time that individual trails or trail segments are proposed.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA §15164[a]) states: *“(a) The lead agency or a responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.”* In turn, §15162 states that preparation of a subsequent EIR is required where one or more of the following occurs: *“(a) When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:*

- (1) *Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;*

- (2) *Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or*
- (3) *New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete shows any of the following:*
 - (A) *the project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;*
 - (B) *significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;*
 - (C) *mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or*
 - (D) *mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.”*

In the present case, none of the requirements apply that would call for preparation of a subsequent EIR. Consequently, this Addendum has been prepared to describe the changes that would accompany approval of the 2003 June Lake Loop Trail Plan.

FURTHER CEQA/NEPA COMPLIANCE REQUIRED

The Trail Plan is programmatic in nature, providing updated trail locations and development guidelines as a supplement to the goals and guidelines offered in the 1991 June Lake Area Plan and Master EIR. As such, the 2003 Trail Plan describes improvements for which only general information is currently known. Elements of this conceptual plan will be more fully articulated as funding and land become available to support individual links. The more detailed assessments will include CEQA and NEPA documentation as required to assess the potential direct and indirect impacts of trail development, based on precise trail alignments and design information.

COMPONENT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The June Lake Area Plan is a component of the Mono County Regional Transportation Plan. As such, the environmental documents prepared in support of the June Lake Area Plan (including this Addendum), should be considered as part of the RTP and its EIR as well.